FUNGI IN GREENHOUSES.

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THAT opportunities for collecting species of fleshy fungi are not ended with the setting in of winter will be evident to any one who undertakes periodical visits to greenhouses within reach. There, under glass, where summer and spring conditions are held captive, or made to order by florist and market-gardener, agarics, polypores and sometimes puffballs show themselves at intervals, sometimes in such force as to prove unwelcome guests. That the species are often the familiar ones of the region is to be expected, though the forms they take are occasionally somewhat novel in unimportant points. But there are also to be found, occasionally, species not to be met with elsewhere, stray representatives of the flora of other zones and countries brought in with imported earth.

An examination of the pages of Stevenson's British Fungi, or of Cooke's Handbook, will show that not a few so-called British species are known in Britain only from their occurrence in "stoves" or hothouses. Some of these, described from collections originally made in such places, have later been discovered in their native habitats, perhaps in Australia or Ceylon, but others are still known only as regular or sporadic intruders in pots and beds in hothouses. Among them are species often of great delicacy and beauty, while others have a more purely botanical interest.

A few notes of a recent visit to some greenhouses near Cambridge are here given.

In the first house entered a crop of lettuce, the third of the season, was being harvested, and at the same time men were making over the ground for the next planting. An inquiry of the foreman for signs of toadstools brought an interested smile to his face, and he at once led us to a spot from which, as he said, the men had thrown out a bushel shortly before. A few were left, and these on examination turned out to be *Tricholoma sordidum*, Fr., not an uncommon species, but showing here great depth and freshness of color, which did not wholly survive the trip home. In another house, also among lettuce plants, on a high bench, was a great display of *Peziza vesiculosa*, Bull., in all stages, from the unopened globular young forms to the fully developed, crowded, irregular fruits, as big as small coffee cups. The owner, who was escorting us, remarked that he hoped to get rid of

these things by treating the earth before each planting to a long soaking in water as nearly boiling hot as he could get it through the hose from his boilers. He had already tried the experiment on another bed with some success. As the Peziza fruits were in fine condition and unusually clean and bright for this species, a quantity was taken for preservation in formalin as class material. In beds near by, a few wilted Coprinus stalks were here and there visible, showing by their headless, inky condition, that it was late in the day. Beside the manure heap, however, outside in the cold, though somewhat sheltered by boards, was an abundant crop of what was probably the same species, *Coprinus fimetarius* (L.) Fr., pushing hardily up into the March wind, in some cases actually through the snow. An inch below the surface were masses of it, still unexpanded and with short stems, waiting only the slightest encouragement to appear in force. Another house offered for exploration long beds of parsley. The crop of leaves was thick, just ready for the market, and some square yards of the bed were already stripped, showing the rows of bare stems a few inches high left standing for another growth. Search here revealed an attractive little reddish brown Peziza with expanded shallow cups a few lines across, seated apparently on the surface. Appearances were deceptive, however, for every cup was attached to a dark slender stem, sometimes a line, sometimes an inch or more in length, reaching down into the soil, where it sprung from an irregular blackish grain or lump, that looked like a bit of hardened earth — a sclerotium. Search showed this Peziza in some abundance, particularly in parts of the bed where the parsley was diseased or dead. In the latter case sclerotia were found often in quantities in and upon the remains of the underground part of the plants. Some of these sclerotia bore from twenty to forty fruits (apothecia). The species was submitted for determination to Dr. W. G. Farlow who writes that it is "*Sclerotinia sclerotiorum* (Libert), in very good condition. Rehm speaks of the apothecia as generally solitary, but in the original specimen of Libert they are clustered just as in your plant, and the microscopic characters agree in all respects with the description. *S. sclerotiorum* also occurs on other Umbelliferae, and in its conidial form is frequent in greenhouses, but its ascosporic form is not often seen."